2016-2017
Influenza Season Education
What is Influenza (Flu)

- Influenza is an infection that is caused by a flu virus. There are many different types of flu viruses

- The flu affects the lungs, throat, nose, and other parts of the body

- Unlike the common cold, the flu comes on suddenly, makes you very sick for a week or longer, and may require hospitalization
How does the flu spread?

- The flu is spread through tiny droplets sprayed into the air when a sick person coughs, sneezes, or even talks.
- A person sheds the infectious influenza virus 1-2 days before any symptoms appear.
- Also spreads when someone touches a surface contaminated with the virus.

*CDC Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases 2012*
The Flu is Highly Contagious

• Infected individuals may be able to infect others before flu symptoms appear. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you’re sick.

http://cdc.gov/flu/HealthcareWorkers.htm
The Flu Can Be Dangerous

- The flu is the eighth leading cause of death in the U.S.
  
  *CDC- National Center for Health Statistics. Deaths and Mortality 2013*

- The CDC reported that during the 2014-2015 flu season, there were a total of 144 influenza-associated pediatric deaths in the United States and that ninety percent of those children were not vaccinated.
What some people say.....

• The flu vaccine doesn’t work
• The flu vaccine can give me the flu
• The flu vaccine isn’t safe
• Since I’m around sick people all the time, I’m already immune to the flu
• I’m not in a high-risk group, so I don’t have to be vaccinated

Time to get the FACTS.....
Why Flu Vaccination Works

• Protecting yourself from flu also protects the people around you who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness

• Flu vaccination can help protect people who are at greater risk of getting seriously ill from flu, like older adults, people with chronic health conditions and young children (especially infants younger than 6 months old who are too young to get vaccinated)

• Flu vaccination may make the illness milder if a person was to get sick and can reduce the risk of more serious flu outcomes like hospitalizations and deaths

CDC Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases 2012
Every flu season is different and infection can affect people differently

- Even healthy people can get very sick from the flu and spread it to others

- “Flu season” in the United States can begin as early as October and last as late as May

- That is why an annual flu vaccine is the best way to reduce the chances that you will get seasonal flu and spread it to others. When more people get vaccinated against the flu, less flu can spread through the community
Who should get vaccinated this season?

• Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every flu season. This recommendation has been in place since February 24, 2010 when the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted for “universal” flu vaccination in the United States to expand protection against the flu to more people

  http://www.cdc.gov/media/pressrel/2010/r100224.htm

• Vaccination to prevent influenza is particularly important for people who are at high risk of serious complications from influenza i.e.; young children, adults over 65 years, pregnant women, long-term care facilities, people with medical conditions (asthma, heart disease, diabetes, weakened immune systems, etc).

  http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm
Can I Get the Flu from the Flu Vaccine?

**NO, this is not possible**
Flu vaccines **CANNOT** cause the flu

The flu shot is:
- Inactivated “killed” vaccine or containing no flu viruses at all
- Known as recombinant influenza vaccine (RIV)

**THIS IS THE FLU VACCINE PROVIDED BY JHS TO ALL EMPLOYEES**

http://www.cdc.gov/flu/HealthcareWorkers.htm
But why did I get Sick Right After Getting a Flu Shot?

You may have gotten sick because of several reasons:

- You may have already been sick when you got the vaccine (but didn’t have any symptoms yet). It takes two weeks for the vaccine to fully protect you.

- You may be infected with the flu after vaccination but before the vaccine has had time to fully protect you.

- Other germs besides flu are around and can cause you to feel sick like the flu, but aren’t the flu.
Is the Flu Vaccine Safe?

YES!

• The flu shot is very safe. Their benefits far outweigh any possible side effects.
  – Some people may have redness and soreness where they received the shot. The soreness is often caused by a person’s immune system making protective antibodies in response to being vaccinated
  – Serious side effects are rare

• The flu shot is a vaccine given with a needle, usually in the arm

• The seasonal flu shot protects against the influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season
I’ve Been in the Healthcare Field for a Long Time, am I Already Protected Against the Flu?

NO, this is not possible

- The flu virus changes every year
- Your body cannot protect itself from new types of flu viruses because your immune system does not recognize it
- A different vaccine is needed every year
- You need to get a flu vaccine every year

http://www.cdc.gov/flu/HealthcareWorkers.htm
National Action Plan to Prevent Health Care-associated Infections

**Purpose:** To continue increasing flu vaccination rates among health care workers, since flu vaccination for health care workers is important not only to help protect themselves, but also to reduce the risk of flu infection for patients or the individuals served

- The Joint Commission sets incremental influenza vaccination goals consistent with achieving the 90% rate established in the national influenza initiatives for 2020

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Action Plan to Prevent Healthcare-Associated Infections is located at:

  NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO PREVENT HEALTH CARE-ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS: ROAD MAP TO ELIMINATION APRIL 2013
Does Vaccinating Healthcare Personnel Really Help?

When hospital workers get vaccinated, community flu rates decrease

Association for Professionals in Infection Control (APIC), 2014
Be Your **PATIENTS’**
Best Shot

Get Vaccinated